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CONSIDERATIONS

ON

PATRONAGES.

Addressed to the

GENTLEMEN of SCOTLAND.



L O N D O N :

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CONSIDERATIONS

ON

PATRONS

OF THE

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND



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CONSIDERATIONS

ON

Patronages, &c.

WHEN the Settlement of the Churches in *Scotland* are occasioning such heat and contention, 'tis surprizing to find so many of the Gentlemen of *Scotland* standing as idle Spectators of the Flame, when it does not actually touch themselves, in the immediate Settlement of their own Parish-Churches, taking no steps to prevent the Disorder in general, by a new Law. The Matter is left almost wholly to the Clergy, and a few Gentlemen who happen to be much under their influence, as if this were an Affair in which the Clergy alone are concerned: while yet 'tis manifest that the Interest of the Gentlemen of *Scotland* is much more concerned than that of the Clergy: and they are generally sensible of it when it is represented to them.

The rash imprudent Schemes pursued by some weak Zealots of the Church, have contributed not a little to make wise Men averse from concurring with them: but this should not hinder their contributing what they can for obtaining a wise Regulation of this matter, different from that pursued by the Zealots. I apprehend that many of the Gentlemen are not yet fully apprized of the miserable State of this matter, according to the present Laws; and of the fatal Consequences to be apprehended, if these Laws continue unrepealed. Others lie still in this affair from a base Indifference about the Interests of their Country, or from a servile Caution of offending those in Power, by taking any Steps to which they are not previously commanded; lest they should lose any little Places or Pensions they hold, or lose their distant Hopes of such Advantages: While yet they won't do the ingenuous friendly office of representing faithfully to Men in Power, what the Nation in general expects from them; the granting of which, would really settle their Interest in the hearts of a great Majority of the Gentry, as well as of the Clergy, and Populace.

The following Considerations are humbly offered to the Gentlemen of *Scotland*; first, on the present State of Patronages, and the Consequences to be apprehended, if the Laws continue as they are; and next are offered some Thoughts upon the Importance of those Rights, which the Gentlemen of *Scotland* have lost by these Laws.

I. To apprehend well the present State of Patronages, we must resume this matter from the Reformation. At that remarkable Period, the whole *Temporalities* of the Church were resumed by the Crown and Parliament: and soon after, a new Maintenance was settled for Ministers, in about 960 Parish-Churches. Yet in that irregular hasty Settlement the *Patronages* were not abolished by Law: The Patrons therefore of the old, splendid, Popish Livings, still claimed a Patronage in the new-settled, poor Stipends for Parish-Ministers. The Lords, or Gentlemen, who got from the Crown Grants of the Superiorities and Lands of old Abbeys, claimed also the Patronage of all the Churches which were in the Gifts of those *Abbeys*, during Popery. The King too claimed the old Patronage of the Crown, and those of any *Ecclesiastick Corporations* not granted away. The *Scotch Bishops*, whensoever they came in, claimed the Patronages belonging in times of Popery to the Popish Sees. But upon the Reformation, the Ecclesiastick Laws, or Acts of Assembly, confirmed also in Parliament, required, in order to a Settlement of a Minister, some Concurrence of the Congregation, of the Heretors and Kirk-Session, before a Presbytery could regularly ordain or install the Minister presented. Frequent Confusions, no doubt, were occasioned by the jarring of the Patrons with the Presbyteries, or Heretors; But the final Decision of all such Debates in the Settlement of Churches, was by Act of Parliament, *James VI. Anno 1567*, committed to the General Assembly.

Thus Matters continued to the Year 1649, when by Act of Parliament Patronages were abolished

lished intirely, and the Election or Nomination of Ministers was committed to the *Kirk-Sessions*, or Elders; who, in those days of universal Sobriety, and, outward Appearance at least, of Religion among the Presbyterians, were generally the Gentlemen or Heretors of best Condition in the Parishes, who were in Communion with the Church. After the Restoration of King *Charles II.*, along with Episcopacy Patronages returned, yet under the old Laws; and all Debates were finally determinable by the *General Assemblies*, which, even under Episcopacy, were the Supreme Ecclesiastick Court. Thus they continued 'till the Revolution, when the Presbyterian Model was restored by Act of Parliament.

The Presbyterian Parliament after the Revolution, *An. 1690*, Act 23. did first abrogate all Laws establishing the Right of Patronage; and “*casts, annul, and make void, that Power altogether;*” committing to the *Heretors and Elders* in the Country, and to *Magistrates, Town-Council, and Elders*, in Burroughs, the Right of electing the Ministers. And then by a subsequent Act, *viz.* the 29th of the same Session, vested all the Superiorities and Rights of the *Scottish Bishops*, in the Crown. Sure they never intended to include among them that Right of Patronage, which by a former Act was abolished altogether. There must be some other Foundation for this Claim of the Crown, if there be any at all. The Patronages of the Bishops, were they to subsist at all, should more naturally have gone, with their other Ecclesiastick Powers, to the several Presbyteries; as that Right now devolves, by any neglect of any Patron, to the Presbytery.

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Thus Matters continued in a very peaceable easy manner till the Year 1711; when the late Queen's Ministry, intending to defeat the *Hanover* Succession, took all methods to harrafs such as were firmly attach'd to it, which the Presbyterian Gentry and Clergy ever were, both from Principle and Interest. An Act therefore was obtained, restoring Patrons to their Power, tho' in the most direct Opposition to the *Articles of Union*, and the publick Faith of the Nation then given, in that sacred Treaty, upon which is founded his Majesty's Title to the Crown of *Scotland*, and the very Parliament of *Great-Britain* itself. This Treaty, as sacredly and solemnly secured to the Church of *Scotland* all its Rights and Privileges, and all the Laws, as they then were, in its favour, to continue unalterable for ever, as it secured any thing else whatsoever.

By this Act, however, in 1711, the King is now in possession of the Patronage of above 550 Churches, out of 950: having not only the old Patronage of the Crown, but many Patronages acquired at the Reformation, not yet alienated; all the Patronages of the fourteen Bishops; and all the Patronages of the Lords forfeited in 1715; and these Patronages may all be used for any such purposes as the Ministers of State shall advise. Of the remaining Churches not in the King's Gift, there are near 200 in the Patronage of some Lords, who sometimes have not one foot of Land in the Parishes, nor any Rents or Interest whatsoever in them, or at best, but some trifling few Duty, or free Tiends; and this by virtue of some old Grant to their Ancestors, of the Superiorities of some Abbeys or Convents; or by their retaining this, among some other little
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Superiorities over Lands, which their Ancestors have squandered away some Ages ago. The Magistrates of some few Burroughs are Patrons of some of their Churches. But there are not 150 Parishes in *Scotland*, where the Patronage is in any Gentleman of considerable Estate, or natural Interest in the Parishes, to whom it is of any real consequence, as to himself, whether the Minister be a Person of Sobriety, Diligence, or good Abilities in his Office, or not.

The Mischiefs of Patronage are but beginning to appear. The Patrons cannot yet successfully present Men of bad Morals, or make *Simoniackal Bargains*, tho' some Attempts of this kind are talked of. The Presbyteries, and some Heretors, are not yet tame enough to quit their Rights altogether; Settlements upon Presentations are often retarded, and sometimes defeated: The Presentations are not yet current saleable Goods; a silly, vicious, or grossly imprudent Presentee, may be defeated. The Gentry, tho' too indolent about the Affair in general, or about the obtaining a new Law, yet when a Settlement, contrary to their Inclinations, is a forcing upon them in their own Parishes, shew abundant Zeal in the particular Case. 'Tis deplorable that the Populace, who have little Judgment about the Abilities of Men, generally pitch upon as weak Candidates as the Patrons do, nay, sometimes upon worse: And the Gentlemen who oppose the Patron must join them, and allow them greater Power than in proportion to their Abilities of discernment. Men must not subdivide into Parties, who are opposing a superior Power. The Presbyteries generally too oppose a Presentation, unless they can bring a tolerable Concurrence of
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the Parish; sometimes chiefly regarding the Heretors, and sometimes the Elders also and People. There are generally yet great Struggles in this Matter. But if the Humour increases among the Gentry of despising their own Right in this Matter; and if along with their Rights, those of the Presbyteries, and other Church-Judicatories, tho' confirmed by Acts of Parliament, must be given up to gratify the Patrons, the Presbyteries and Elders thus deserted by the Gentlemen, will soon be wearied out, especially if Decisions of the Lords of the Session run against them: Then at last every Presentation will pass current, and take effect, without Opposition; and when this happens the natural Effects of such a Settlement of Patronage will appear deplorable.

Instead of studying Sobriety of Manners, Piety, Diligence or Literature, one or other of which Qualities are now necessary to recommend the Candidates to the Favour of Heretors, Elders, or Presbytery, the Candidates sole study will be to stand right in *Politicks*, to make his Zeal for the *Ministry of State* conspicuous, or by all servile compliance with the Humour of some great Lord who has many Churches in his Gift, whether that Humour be virtuous or vicious, to secure a Presentation from him.

When a Patron, or one much in favour with a Patron, or with a Minister of State happens to be mercenary and covetous there will be *Bribes* and *Purchases* in the case. A Man of Literature of a Gentlemanly Education, can afford nothing for a small Stipend, the whole of which cannot maintain him in the way of Life he must lead, or provide him with Books for his further Improvement. The poor illiterate Wretch,

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who never was accustomed to a better way of Life than a Plough-man, who desires no Books, or learned Conversation, or Society with Gentlemen, he is the sure Purchaser ; he can subsist on twenty or thirty Pounds *per annum* ; to him this is a sufficient Living, nay his Condition is raised ; he can allow the other half of his Stipend to run on for eight or ten Years to discharge the *Simoniackal Debt*. In better Livings of 90 or 100 *l. per annum* the Bargain may be better : the Price may be three or four hundred Pounds Sterling ; a Sum not despicable to some very honourable Families in *Scotland*, or great Court-Favourites. One must expect, whenever Presentations take effect without obstruction, that this will be the case ordinarily in this Country, where there is so much Indigence ; and then the *Scotch* Clergy will be the most despicable Set of Church-men in *Christendom*.

Many of the Gentry who depend on the present Ministers of State, and have their Favour, are very keen in the Cause of Patronages : 'tis the Power of their Patrons they are supporting. Little do they think of the Inconstancy of Power, or Favour at Court, what they now are building up, may hereafter be the Support and Defence of their Enemies, upon a Change of Favour. The Enemies to the present Ministry, however many of them appear keen for the Repeal of the Patronage Act, yet would be grieved if it succeeded under the present Ministry ; they well know how popular an Act it would be to restore so valuable a Right to the Body of the Gentry in *Scotland* : they know that the whole Odium of the Refusal will still fall upon those in Power and those only. No Artifice the Ministers of State can use will
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screen them from it; if the Bill is defeated it is by their means, however they may allow a Friend or two to vote for it. They could easily carry the Bill without Expence or Trouble if they pleased, when so many of the State-Opposition are moving for it. A Lord or two may desire to be heard by their Lawyers against the Bill, but 'tis well known that if the Court were hearty for it these very Lords, rather than lose their *Places* or *Pensions*, would be the first Movers for the Repeal. The Repeal indeed would diminish a little, and but a very little, the Power of the present Ministry to oblige Friends by a Presentation from the Crown now and then. But till the Heretors, Elders, People, and Clergy have forgotten more thoroughly their ancient Right this Power is not so very considerable. It may indeed hereafter become pretty great, and obtain to some future Ministers perhaps four or five Years Purchase of near two thirds of the Church-Revenues of *Scotland* as they fall vacant.

'Tis submitted to all impartial Men whether that Act in 1711 was not the most direct Breach of the most solemn publick Faith in the Articles of Union? And whether it can be very glorious in the Ministers or Friends of a Protestant Prince of the *Hanover-Line*, to retain that Claim, so oppressive to the Church of *Scotland*, which was introduced by the Enemies of that illustrious Family, on purpose to distress and raise Dissensions in the Church of *Scotland*, because of their steady Adherence to their Succession, when it was in great Danger.

II. As to the *Importance* of those Rights the Gentlemen of *Scotland* are deprived of by that

Law restoring Patronages: Rights are of importance, according to Men's Notions of Life: what affects Religion is of Importance to the Religious: but to all Men it is of Importance to have some Power to serve their Friends, or the Men they esteem and love. Suppose a Man of Fortune void of all Religion or regard to Piety and Virtue, yet he must desire such Power of every kind. Would not any Gentleman think himself highly injured, were he deprived of his Right of voting in the Meetings of the Shire, about chusing the Collectors of the Sess, or any other civil Matters? And yet this is but one Vote among 50 or 60 Votes, or perhaps 90 or 100, in chusing to Places of small Profit. What is it then when the whole Gentry of a Nation, or at last ninety-nine in a hundred, lose their Votes, and all Influence in Elections to Places of greater Value, in Elections where each one had a Vote among eighteen or twenty Voters, nay, sometimes among far fewer? This is the case as to Elections of Parish-Ministers. What is it to have the Votes of almost all who have any natural Concern in such Matters struck off; to have near two thirds of such Places disposed of by a Minister of State, or some Favourite of his, while the best Gentlemen in the Country are mere Cyphers in this Matter which so nearly concerns them; and the remaining third part of such Places in the Gift of a few Lords and Gentlemen who often have no Estate or Interest in the Parishes? The most disagreeable Man, who has perhaps affronted a Gentleman, may be settled under his Nose as a Spy upon him, by a Court Interest; or by some disaffected Lord, because of the Gentleman's good Affection to the King and his Ministry. 'Tis surprizing

prizing that the Gentry of *Scotland* are not more aware of the Consequences of all this, as a civil Matter, abstracted from all religious Considerations.

As to those who have some Regards for Religion, they cannot be at a loss in seeing the Mischiefs which must arise in a little time from the present Laws. Let Divines insist on Arguments from Scripture, and the innumerable severe Canons in the early and less corrupt Ages of the Church: I suggest only Thoughts of common Prudence.

Can a Minister of State at *London* know the Characters of our Probationers for the Ministry in the Church? Is it to be expected that his Dependents and Favourites, in soliciting by his means for a regal Presentation, will ordinarily regard conscientiously the moral Characters and Abilities of the Candidates? Is there no danger of *secret Contracts* of a very infamous nature? If a Candidate is related to one who has some Votes in the Shire for Members of Parliament, or has great Interest in a Burrough, mayn't he generally obtain a regal Presentation from a Minister of State without any regard to Merit? nay may not Men of Interest in Shires or Burroughs make conditional Sales of such Presentations? 'Tis certain there may be some Abuse made, some Mistakes may happen upon the best Schemes of Church-Settlements: But let any Man of common Candour consider whether the Dangers of Presentation of worthless, immoral, or weak mean Men be not incomparably greater according to the present State of Patronages, than in almost any Scheme which was ever devised. If Ministers are to be chosen by the Men of Property in the several

ral Parishes, in conjunction with the Elders as Representatives of the People, is there any such Hope of Success to a vicious or despicable Creature? How hardly will a number of Persons somewhat concerned in the Character of their Minister, be either unacquainted with it or concur in electing an infamous Candidate? Can Ministers of State or great Lords living at *London*, or in remote parts of *Scotland*, have such Opportunities of Information, or such Interest in settling agreeable diligent wise Men? Can a *Simoniackal Bargain* be a Secret which is contracted with ten or a dozen of Electors? There's no Comparison in these points. Would Heretors, Elders, Presbytery, or People, ever have chosen that *Fornication-Hero* who is lately excommunicated? 'Tis well known that Kirk-Session, Presbytery, Synod, and People, long opposed his Settlement, 'till at last the want of legal Proof of relevant Immoralities, and the great Deference to that truly noble and great Lord the Patron, brought them to a sort of unwilling Compliance. When such an Instance happened by the Presentation of that most noble Lord, whose hereditary Good-will and Affection to the Church of *Scotland*, whose Superiority to all base Temptations of Money are so well known, what may be dreaded from many other Patrons of very different Characters?

Is it nothing to the Gentlemen of *Scotland* to transmit, along with their Lands, to their Heirs a *natural hereditary Influence* among their Neighbours, by which they can reward any wise ingenious sober Scholar, who by faithful Diligence as a Tutor, has formed the Minds of their Heirs to Knowledge and Virtue? What when a worthy Kinsman takes to that way of Life in the Church?

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If a Gentleman's Relations are unworthy or vicious, unfit for that sacred Office, Men of Estates won't get the Concurrence of other Heretors and Elders or the Presbytery. But when the Kinsman is really worthy and pious, is it nothing to have some Influence in obtaining to him a comfortable Support? Must this whole Power be confined to the King and seven or eight Lords? As to the few Burroughs where Magistrates and Council are now Patrons of their own Churches, or of some of them, they have their own Friends to take care of: Country Gentlemen cannot have any Expectation from them. Is it the true *Scotch* Spirit to love to be Suppliants for every thing, to cringe to Men in Power rather than to have a natural Power of their own, a few *Beneficia Populi*, to be obtained by their Favour?

Is it to be expected that Men of Fortune, thus deprived of what was established to them as their Right by the most solemn Faith of the most solemn Treaty incorporating two Nations, will think themselves concerned to regard or to support the Credit and Influence of Preachers forced upon them without their Consent? And when Ministers are thus neglected by Men of Fortune in the Parish, and perhaps affronted (as the Passions of Men in a just Cause may often lead them farther than they ought) is it to be expected that Ministers won't soon too be despised by the Populace, and lose all Influence with them as to any thing of Piety or Virtue in their Manners? I need not enlarge upon these Mischiefs; they are abundantly known in some Places already; and all who have any regard to Religion must think it a Matter of Consequence to prevent them for the future.

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In whatever light we consider this Matter, it can't appear as a thing indifferent. Is it not of some Importance to Gentlemen to have a Minister capable of entertaining them agreeably in publick with rational and edifying Discourses? Is it nothing to Gentlemen particularly to such as reside in the Country, to have a Minister they could make a Friend of, a Man of Letters and good Sense one of social virtuous Dispositions of Mind, who hath had the Advantage of a liberal Education and not only knows Books but Men and good Company? Would not a Gentleman also value one who understands and teaches the true Principles of Religion and Morality to his Children his Family his Tenants and all his Neighbourhood, and who does what he can by his Life and Doctrine to form their Tempers and Lives in the most effectual Manner for promoting their own Happiness, and being good Members of Society; one who is capable of giving wise Advices, reconciling Variances, promoting Peace and Love, and hath a just Influence for advancing these good Ends? Abstracting even from Christianity and a future State, don't these things well deserve the Care and Attention of any Gentleman of Thought and Conduct. And is it not therefore of some Consequence to have some Influence in their Parishes in the Choice of a right Minister? And if we suppose that Gentlemen have a real Regard to Piety and our holy Christian Religion, as God be thanked there are still many such in *Scotland*, they have still much more Reason to be solicitous in this Matter.

I shall not say much of the present Bill in dependence, or other Schemes proposed. 'Tis plain the Bill proposed would effectually prevent many
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of these Evils which arise from Patronage. If it took place Settlements would generally be according to the Inclinations of the principal Men of Interest in each Parish, who could give most Credit and Influence to the Minister, and contribute most to his Encouragement in his Work, and these Men of Interest generally speaking would bring the Tenants and inferior People along with them, so that unhappy Debates and Divisions about Settlements would be in a great measure prevented. There are few Parishes in which there would not be ten or twelve Electors; there generally would be three times that number. The People would be represented by the Elders, and hold a like Ecclesiastick Liberty to that they have in civil Matters. Simony would be generally impracticable. Immoral or weak Men could have small hopes of Admission.

If that Bill passed I should not doubt of seeing a great Improvement among the *Scotch* Clergy in a few Years. More of the younger Sons of Gentlemen would study Divinity, and such would have better Hopes of being soon admitted into Livings. Their better Education and Interest, with their Patrimonys, would obtain more Esteem and Influence among the Gentry as well as among the People. They might be improving Companions, Instructors, Advisers to the better sort in general, particularly to young Gentlemen in their Education and Conduct in Life.

Nor would the Sons of Gentlemen have any reason to despise this way of Life. To every wise and vertuous Man this Office must appear to be of the most useful Tendency, wherein a Man may at least propose to do as much Good to his Fellow-Creatures, as in any other of the middle
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Stations of Life whatsoever ; and therefore it has the justest Claim to Esteem and Respect among Mankind. And it may be said in general that bad as we are it must be owing to the present Misbehaviour of Clergymen themselves if they want as much Regard (among People at least of ordinary Thought and Discretion) as they ought reasonably to desire. And though indeed their Livings be but small in comparison of those in the neighbouring Countries, or rather that they are more equally divided and no very great Benefices among them, yet such as they are they don't seem to be below, even in a civil Account, Gentlemen's younger Sons, or even the eldest Sons of many of them. At a moderate Computation one with another including Glebes and Manſes they may be reckoned about Eighty Pounds *per annum*. Pray how few Gentlemen's Sons make more in their different Ways of Life, even those of our other learned Professions, Lawyers, Attorneys, Physicians, Surgeons, how few of them would not chearfully give their yearly Profits by their Business for Eighty Pounds? Where one makes more in *Scotland*, I believe I may venture to say three make less. And what is a great Advantage to Ministers is that what they have is sure, at least not exposed to such terrible Vicissitudes or such precarious Circumstances as the Fortunes of most other People are. Besides much depends upon that Sobriety and Regularity of Life both at home and abroad which their Character in a particular manner requires, and enables them to live better upon their Stipends, than most other People in a different Way, upon the like Sum and a good deal more.

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If Gentlemen's Sons were educated this way a stop would naturally be put to Lads of mean Parentage and Circumstances directing their Views to the Ministry, none of whom indeed should be encouraged or recommended by Gentlemen or Ministers and push'd through Schools and Colleges as too many since the Revolution have been, unless there be evidently something uncommonly bright and promising in their Genius. For the Interests of Religion and Virtue and the reasonable Credit and Influence of the Clergy for doing Good, I wish that much more Caution may be used this way for the future. For this Reason it is to be desired that some Regulation were made about Burfaries, that some were suppressed altogether, and two, three, or four others were joined in one, to be a handsome Encouragement not below any young Man of real Merit. Some Method I hope will be fallen upon for this. But in the mean time it is one thing indeed that very much recommends this Bill to me, that by putting Settlements chiefly into the hands of the principal Men of Interest in the Parishes, it will encourage a greater number of virtuous and studious young Gentlemen to take to this way of Life, which is contemptible upon no account, if it be not perhaps thought so by reason of so many People of very mean Birth and Fortune having got into it. And this is what I think very well deserves the Consideration of the *Scotch* Gentry, those particularly of the middle kind, and should also excite the Concern of all those who wish well to the Advancement of all valuable and useful Improvements among the Clergy.

There have been many other Schemes proposed about the Settlement of Churches, every one of which is liable to Inconveniencies, and I am far from thinking the one proposed in the Bill is altogether free of them. Yet I would prefer it to the most I have seen, particularly to such as put it wholly or chiefly in the hands of the Populace. Instead of many Reasons I shall only name one why I would do so, *viz.* that the Populace are by no means the fittest and best Judges of ministerial Qualifications. Preaching for instance is one main thing to be noticed in a right Choice. Now what kind of Preachers are they whom the Vulgar chiefly admire? Why chiefly those who strike their outward Senses in the strongest manner, such as have the most noisy and strange Vociferation, use the most violent Action and Gestures; or such as declaim most against Superiors in Church and State, and shew the warmest Zeal about little things. They may live well enough with Ministers of another Character. But such Clergymen as these now described will be generally the greatest Idols of the Populace, though they are possessed of little Learning, Sense, or Moderation, or any other good Qualities. Now if the Choice of Ministers were chiefly in the Vulgar, I would be much afraid this would be one bad Effect among others, that it would be too violent a Temptation to Preachers in order to gain the Applause of the Electors to suit themselves to their mean and depraved Taste. A Habit of this kind is soon contracted, and the Effect of it very charming to many Minds, and indeed it is a much more easy Task than to gain the rational Approbation of Gentlemen of Virtue and Discernment. But
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alas need I say of what vast Prejudice this would be to all elegant and valuable Studies? and what is much more to be considered a very great Loss to the Interests of true Religion and Virtue?

But not to argue upon other Schemes, it may be of more use to notice that by Men's disagreeing about the different Schemes in any good Design, the whole is often defeated. It were heartily to be wished that all would unite in the one already proposed in Parliament, even though they don't think it the best possible. No Scheme will prevent all Inconveniences; and none will ever succeed which does not allow a great Influence to the Gentlemen of Estates. 'Tis a grand Advance to remove once the old inveterate Evil of *Patronage*; Amendments may perhaps be more easily obtained hereafter, if they are found necessary. 'Tis strange Folly to be contriving varieties of Schemes while it is yet so uncertain whether any Alteration is really intended by those who alone can accomplish it. I can't but suspect all as Enemies in their hearts to this Repeal who are not willing to accept that Bill with all Gratitude to God and our Civil Governours, whatever better Plans they may fancy: and setting a-foot unpracticable Schemes, such as cannot be expected from the *Legislature*, must be a Stratagem of the secret Enemies of the whole Design, by which weak honest Men are to be defeated of the Advantage desired.

Honest Men who wish well to the Country and King, and to the Church of *Scotland*, should not upon any Delay of their Requests run violently against the King, or those he thinks fit to employ. Enemies of the Church may instigate them to this Conduct, on purpose to defeat

feat the Repeal of Patronages. This Conduct oftner flows from a *fastidious ambitious Spirit*, than from real Love to our Country. But 'tis hoped the Friends of the Administration will seriously consider the Danger to the Country from such continual Ferments; the terrible Evils to be feared from the Patronages when they come to take effect without Opposition; the Corruptions of the Clergy, and the neglect of Religion and Sobriety of Manners among the People, when unrestrained by a Clergy, grown despicable or hateful to them: and the Advantages which would accrue to the body of the Gentry from obtaining their old Right again; while yet the Patrons if they are Men of Estates in the Parishes would still have an Influence almost equal to Patronage, of a more neighbourly and gainly sort. If these things be well considered and represented to the Ministry by those who stand well with them, such Applications could not well want Success.

At the Quarterly Meetings of the Shires are there none on the Court-Side, who have such Regard for their Country and Church, as to concert proper Representations, or Petitions about this Matter? Must every thing Popular, every Motion in favour of the Country, of the Body of the Gentry, of the Church, ever take its rise among Gentlemen disaffected to the Administration?

I might mention many other Considerations to shew that 'tis of consequence to Gentlemen to countenance the Clergy of *Scotland* more than they do; to improve their Condition; to chuse Men of Learning and Manners. Most Gentlemen are solicitous to have their Sons sober and
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virtuous, and yet where Religion; and those employed in religious Offices, are so generally neglected and despised, the young Gentry will ever look upon Sobriety, and Virtue, and Piety, as Qualities necessary only in the Mob, or the Teachers of the mean Populace.

Were Clergymen pleading for more Power, or great Augmentations of their Livings by burdening further the Gentlemen's Estates, the Laity should be on their guard. But when the point aimed at is the enlarging the Power of the body of the Landed-Gentlemen, 'tis strange that any of the Gentry should oppose them, or refuse their Concurrence, except those few who have great Patronage themselves.

The direct pleading for Patronages in *Scotland* is so odious to all Men of Piety, that not one of the Clergy, not a King's Chaplain, or *Politician-Clergyman* among them dared to open his mouth in favour of them in their Assemblies or Synods, how much soever some such are suspected to favour them secretly, through Confidence in their Court-Favour; in hopes to get regal Presentations to Cousins and Tools of their own. All honest Men among the Clergy abhor them; though the high Spirit (I call it so rather than Pride) of some of them makes them lie by, out of Indignation that some weak hot Men have got a greater Following among the Populace, and greater Influence in Synods and Assemblies. I hope good and wise Men will conquer this low Resentment, and be no longer inactive in so good a Cause, the Success of which is their hearts desire and Prayer to God; though they should not have the Glory among the Populace of any Success which may ensue,

ensue, or of any honest Efforts whether they succeed or not. A faithful Representation from some of the wiser and calmer Men in the Church would contribute much more to advance the Design than the Clamours of Multitudes.

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